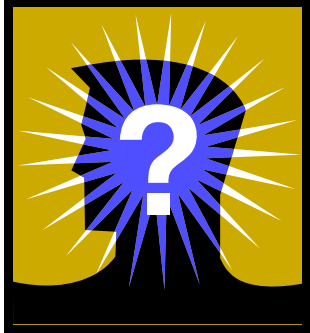

Unit 7

General Staff— Planning Section

Check Your Knowledge



1. What is the function of each unit of the Planning Section?
2. What is the Incident Action Plan (IAP)?
3. Which unit is responsible for Geospatial Intelligence?
4. Which unit is responsible for preparing the Situation Report?
5. Put the following into correct order -
 - Prepare for the planning meeting.
 - Conduct planning meeting/develop IAP.
 - Assess the incident.
 - Determine objectives.
 - Evaluate IAP.

Check Your Knowledge

Answers



1. Situation Unit — collects, analyzes, displays information.

Resource Unit — tracks and reports resources.

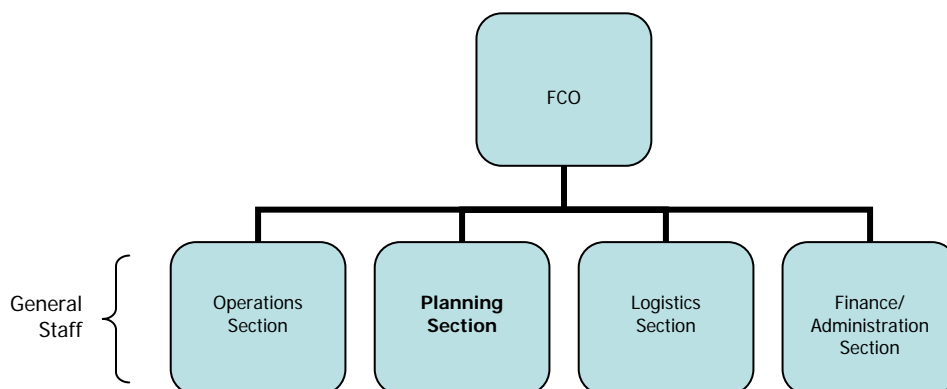
Documentation Unit — writes Situation Reports and maintains records.

Demobilization/IAP Unit — writes Incident Action Plan and the demobilization plan.

Technical Specialists — provide expertise in a specific field or area, e.g., meteorologists, geologists, etc.

2. The Plan which establishes the incident objectives and details the activities and resources needed to accomplish the objectives.
3. Situation Unit.
4. Documentation Unit.
5.
 - Assess the incident.
 - Determine objectives.
 - Prepare for the planning meeting.
 - Conduct the planning meeting/develop the IAP.
 - Evaluate IAP.

Planning



Overview

This unit deals with the Planning Section as one of four general sections under the FCO during disaster recovery. The contents are:

- The five Planning Units
- The Planning Process
- The Incident Action Plan (IAP)
- The Situation Report
- Other Support

At the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- Explain the responsibilities of each unit in the Planning Section.
- Describe the Incident Action Plan (IAP).
- List the steps in the planning process.
- Identify other types of information or support provided by the Planning Section.

Planning Section Organization and Functions

The Planning Section consists of five units.

Situation Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receives information from all assisting and cooperating agencies (Federal, State, local, and Tribal).• Analyzes all incoming information and converts general data into intelligence.• Prepares and conducts briefings.• Manages the Situation room.• Develops and maintains informational displays and maps.
Documentation Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Validates information received from the Situation Unit.• Produces Situation Reports (SITREPS).• Produces fact sheets, organization charts, and initial operating reports.• Assists Operations with certain facets of IAP implementation as needed.• Records (scribes) daily planning and senior staff meetings.• Maintains historical records.
Resource Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tracks and maintains status of all operational resources (including personnel).• Coordinates efforts with Operations and Logistics for resource tracking.• Provides timely data related to resources and actions with respect to implementing, executing, and completing objectives during a specific operational period.• Provides products and displays for the Situation Unit.
Demobilization Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilitates daily IAP meeting for the FCO.• Facilitates the development of the IAP for the specified operational period.• Develops long-range plans required to support response and recovery operations.• Develops contingency plans and other ERT management plans.• Assists with development of functional plans for other sections and ESFs. Integrates these plans into the overall Strategic Plan.

Technical Specialists	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assist with many different aspects of emergency management. Address staffing needs for a particular type of experience, skill, or knowledge.• Can include Environmental, Seismological, Statisticians, Meteorologists, Intelligence, Law Enforcement, Training.
------------------------------	--

The Planning Section is responsible for a wide range of written documents. Among the most important products are the Situation Report and the Incident Action Plan.

The **Situation Report (SITREP)** is a comprehensive, accurate overview of significant operations actions, plans, and issues related to a disaster or emergency for a specified time period. SITREP information is used routinely for governmental reports and briefings. FEMA SITREP information is used by DHS, Congress, and the White House. A good SITREP includes an analysis and an interpretation of the information presented. Because the report provides the basis for decisionmaking, accuracy is essential.

The Incident Action Plan

The **Incident Action Plan (IAP)** contains the incident objectives and the overall strategies for reaching those objectives. The Planning Section prepares and distributes the IAP after input from appropriate Sections and staff. The Plan is designed for one operational period and identifies specific, measurable objectives set by the FCO. The plan can be stated orally or written. For large incidents, frequent staff changes, and multiple agency involvement, a written IAP is used.

The **operational period** is set by the FCO. It may be as short as 8 hours or longer than a week, depending on operational requirements. Generally, the operational period is 24 hours during the initial weeks of a response and progresses to a longer duration as the recovery phase sets in. During Federal response and recovery operations, the FCO, with advice from the Operations and Planning Section Chiefs, will set the “O period”.



The Planning Process

There are six steps in the **planning process**:

1. Assess the incident.
2. Establish incident objectives.
3. Prepare for the planning meeting.
4. Conduct the planning meeting and develop the IAP.
5. Conduct the operations briefing and implement the IAP.
6. Evaluate the IAP.

When an Incident Commander/FCO arrives on the scene, he or she will **assess the incident** by asking these key questions:

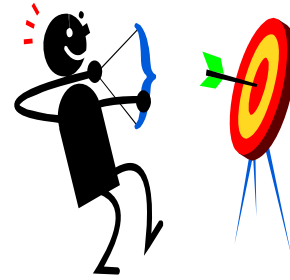
- What happened?
- What is the current status of the incident and the victims?
- What is the physical, economic, social, and political impact of the incident?
- What is the current status of response efforts?
- What are the needed resources?
- What are the available resources?

The answers are the Essential Elements of Information, known as EEs. The situation will be continually reassessed by the FCO during recovery operations. The Planning Section provides information vital to this process.

The FCO sets the general strategy for the most efficient and effective disaster recovery. Along with the Planning Section, he/she will develop contingencies if the projected situation or strategy changes. **Establishing incident objectives** is the next phase of the process. Multiple factors and considerations play a role in this and the FCO focuses on developing objectives consistent with State needs.

Incident objectives must be:

- Coordinated among ERT elements.
- Measurable—so the ERT can determine progress and achievement.
- Attainable—with available resources.
- Flexible—enough to allow Operations to achieve them in the best possible way.



On larger incidents, the Planning Section may **prepare for the planning meeting** by facilitating the Command Meeting and the Tactics Meeting ahead of time. These are smaller meetings and involve upper JFO management. Objectives, strategies, tactics, priorities, jurisdictions, geographic boundaries, and operational periods are discussed at these meetings.

Conduct the Planning Meeting

FEMA JFO personnel refer to this as the Senior Staff meeting. It is the Planning Section's responsibility to notify participants when and where the meeting will take place. It is the Planning Section Chief's responsibility to facilitate the meeting in an organized fashion, complete with ground rules and a standard agenda. The Operations Section describes the selected tactics and the assignments. The members of the Command and General Staffs indicate their ability to support the plan. All participants should be prepared, and the meeting should last about 30 minutes.

Develop the Incident Action Plan

Following the planning meeting, the Planning Section compiles the plan onto the correct forms and distributes it to the appropriate staff. If there is a prolonged lapse of time between the development of the IAP and its release, the General Staff reviews the plan again to ensure that it reflects the current situation and actions.

Conduct the Operations Briefing Meeting and Implement the Plan

Depending on the type of disaster and the response to it, Planning may **conduct the operations briefing**. The final plan is presented with as much detail as possible. The plan is tactically executed after its distribution.

Evaluate the IAP

During the operational period, the FCO and Command and General Staffs regularly assess work and progress toward the incident objectives. Appropriate adjustments are made as necessary.

The planning process allows the FCO and other leaders and managers to measure performance against objectives. It ensures that all ERT components operate in a unified, synchronized manner toward the same goals.



Other Types of Planning Information and Support

The Planning Section offers other services to the ERT. The Section can prepare or provide:

- Information Collection plan (targets and concentrates collection activities on high-value information, a.k.a., EEIs)
- Special Function plans
- Transition plans
- Trend analysis
- Critical resource analysis
- Jurisdictional profiles
- Daily intelligence summaries
- Special analyses
- Disaster assessment information
- Status of mission assignments
- Status of incident objectives
- Critical issues
- Status of programs

- Functional area statistics (daily and cumulative)
- Situation briefings

Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

GIS is defined as:

- An information system designed to work with data referenced by spatial or geographic coordinates.
- Both a database system and a set of operations for working with the data.

GIS is used to:

- Conduct geospatial analyses of information.
- Depict disaster boundaries and estimate impacts.
- Identify various categories of key facilities located in, or around, a damaged area.

Remote Sensing

Satellite Imaging and/or aerial photography can:

- Provide for developing assessment strategy information.
- Operate in some difficult weather conditions (depending on capabilities).
- Be imposed on GIS products.
- Cover wide geographical areas.

Summary

Information management supports every aspect of disaster response. The Planning Section has particular responsibilities relating to collection, management, and dissemination of information. The planning process is one tool that gathers information from many different areas of the JFO. The Incident Action Plan and the Situation Report, prepared by the Planning Section, are two important documents that share information with the ERT.